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ABSTRACT

The benefits of girls' education include increased family incomes, later marriages, reduced fertility rates, reduced infant and maternal mortality rates, better nourished families, and greater opportunities for women. However, ingrained attitudes towards women are difficult to change. Only when communities believe that the benefits of girls in school outweigh the perceived deficits will they allow girls to attend school. A Save the Children program in a rural district of Uganda was successful in establishing primary schooling and enrolling girls because it mobilized community support. The first step taken was to engage community members in a participatory assessment of behavioral and attitudinal change. Attitudes toward the change--establishment of primary education and enrollment of girls--were determined first. Then, characteristics of the change were discussed and defined. In this case, the community wanted one school building, located within 3-5 kilometers, managed by a community-based school management committee, following local curricula taught in a local language. Next, contextual support was determined. The incentives for enrolling girls were enumerated by parents who valued education. These incentives were then used to change the attitudes and behaviors of parents not yet convinced to support girls' education. Finally, a discussion of resources determined what resources were needed and available, and how gaps in resource availability might be addressed. Four figures depict the change paradigm used in this project. (TD)

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Community Mobilization For Girls Enrollment in Educational Settings:

Triggers of Change Paradigm

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Introduction

Statistics on the number of girls in developing countries not enrolled in primary school are well-known: 60% of the total 125 million population of 6-11 years olds or a total of 75 million girls, (1) or one quarter of all girls ages 6-11. (2)

Discussion of these statistics often includes the term "gender gap", indicating that girls are generally under-represented in the enrollment category compared to boys: "Of the 52 countries with a gender gap in the primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of 5% or more, 47 have a gender gap that disadvantages girls." (3)

The factors influencing these low enrollment statistics for girls are also well known: poverty, parental resistance, lack of access to schools, teacher prejudice, irrelevant curricula, unsafe/unhygienic schools, and malnutrition. The list of factors goes on and on. Educators, politicians and women worldwide – not to mention girls themselves - could feel shear desperation about the inability of girls to attend school.

But they shouldn't, and this paper intends to propose why not. First, it describes a set of communities in which the enrollment rate of girls in primary school is increasing, not decreasing. It then offers a paradigm for determining triggers and community mobilization strategies which motivate families and communities to support girls education. As a result, this paper provides a positive lens through which to view the future of girls enrollment in education.

Obviously, once girls are enrolled in school, it is as crucial to retain them, not only from a nation-building perspective, but from a cost-effective, resource investment rationale as well. While examining retention and completion factors pertinent to girls education is a worthy study, it would broaden the scope of this particular paper too wide. Thus, only school enrollment strategies at the community level focus this paper's discussion of a model for examining the change behavior in support of girls' education.

Community Mobilization for Behavioral Change on Girls Enrollment

Despite the fact that a quarter of all girls worldwide are not attending school, three-quarters do. In developing countries alone, girls enrollment has increased by over 44 million between 1990 and 2000 (4). Today, discussion of the barriers to girls attendance is being replaced by a discussion of the benefits and strategies to eliminate those barriers. This sea change in perspective on girls education is due to many factors – political, economic and social. However, critical to a community-mobilization approach to girls enrollment is the supportive evidence that girls, parents, and their communities directly benefit– rather than suffer from- girls education. These benefits include:

- Increased family incomes
- Later marriages
- Reduced fertility rates
- Reduced infant and maternal mortality rates
- Better nourished and healthier children and families
- Greater opportunities for choices for women (5).

One might think, therefore, that the goal for educational change agents at the community level is simply to share these benefits with parents and girls will come flocking to school. Regretfully, that is not the case. Ingrained attitudes - based on historic and cultural norms around the role of girls, specifically, and women, in general – are difficult to change. Development stakeholders must learn how to assist communities in changing those attitudes and in believing that the benefits of girls in school far outweigh the preconceived deficits. Only then will parents – and their local communities - act on allowing girls to attend school. This paper proposes that stakeholders can learn how by first

engaging community members in assessing their own attitudes and behaviors nested in their community beliefs, and secondly, by using that assessment to their advantage in designing community mobilization strategies for change.

The CHANCE Model in Uganda

Nakasongla District, north of Kampala, has long been an area lacking in government services. Populated primarily by pastoralist and fishing families, their mobility has long been seen as a barrier to any sustainable government investment, particularly an investment in primary education. Upon the 1997 Ugandan government declaration of universal primary education, the children in this district would have been ignored again if it had not been for a group of parents and community leaders who led a community development project aimed at increasing access to primary schools. This project, entitled CHANCE (**Ch**ild-Centered **A**lternatives for **n**on-formal **C**ommunity-Based **E**ducation), was designed in 1998 by Save The Children USA in conjunction with Ministry of Education representatives, parents and community leaders of Nakasongola district. The input of parents and community leaders in designing this project's community mobilization strategies is what I'd like us to examine here.

To begin, in June and July of 1999, Save The Children staff were invited by local Ministry officials and parents within Nakasongola District to conduct an analysis of barriers to school access, particularly for girls. Community meetings were held with children, parents, local leaders, community representatives to identify those barriers and strategies to overcome them. The following barriers were highlighted: lack of accessible schools, inflexibility of the school calendar, too long a school day, low literacy rates, poverty, labour conflicts, untrained teachers, HIV/AIDS, disabilities, and – for girls particularly- early marriage. (6).

Twenty pilot communities were chosen in August 1999by local village leaders and district officials to participate in CHANCE. Supported by Save The Children USA, this project ensured that the opinions of parents and community members towards education – as identified in the analysis - became the philosophical and practical foundation upon which community support was mobilized and schools built. In September, twenty (20) local School Management Committees (SMCs) were formed to oversee the school development in heir respective communities. Comprised of nine community-based individuals –at least four of whom were women – each SMC determined the construction site, management, teacher selection and supervision, daily school schedule, and yearly calendar of the new school. Together with other representatives of the community and Save The Children resource staff, twenty (20) Primary 1 classrooms were built and local teachers were recruited. By October 1999, the teachers had been trained by Save The Children facilitators and 600 pupils between the ages of 6-16 were being taught by local teachers and their attendance regularly checked by SMC members. Three-hundred (300) of these pupils were girls – all represented children of pastoralists or fishing families.(7) In order for the schools to meet the particular work demands of a these migratory families– and girls in particular – a flexible daily schedule and yearly calendar was implemented: 3 ½ hours per day- usually from 9:30 to 12:30 - running most of the year. (8). In addition, instructional materials were community-based and mobile blackboards were built.

By May of 2000, twenty new facilitators, forty-seven local teachers school and forty school management committees had been organized. From a population of 600 students in 20 communities in 1999, the CHANCE program had grown in August 2001 to 68 classrooms covering Primary 1, 2 and 3, reaching 2,700 students. (9).

CHANCE Results

And what have been the results?

As of February 2002, the results of CHANCE have been:

- Academic performance of CHANCE schools has surpassed that of the government schools in all subjects (10) (perhaps specify "in the same district," unless it was reported for all government schools in all of Uganda (which I don't think is the case)
- Eighteen (18) Nakasongola communities initiated their own second classrooms next to the original CHANCE classrooms
- Parents and ministry officials in the pastoralist districts of Luwero and Masindi and the fishing district of Mukono neighboring Nakasongola have indicated an interest in replicating the CHANCE model.

Slowly but surely – based on parental and community input – disadvantaged populations of girls – and boys- from pastoralist and fishing families have access to quality education.

Identifying Triggers Of Change

Lessons from CHANCE

The CHANCE example invites those concerned with the enrollment of disadvantaged populations – including girls - to examine what constitutes "triggers of change" and, then, to determine community mobilization strategies that support these triggers. An unique aspect of this examination is its fit into the global girls education research arena. Current research suggests there are a myriad number of factors specific to girls enrollment (11). Studies on the barriers, benefits and strategies to improve enrollment abound. The "triggers of change" model - based in community mobilization research, however,- begs educational researchers and stakeholders to broaden their work first by engaging parents and community members in their own assessment of behavioral and attitudinal change. Before identifying barriers to enrollment, before determining

whether a community agrees with its benefits, and – certainly - before developing a strategy to mobilize communities around girls enrollment, might it not be beneficial to determine who in a community already believes in girls enrollment? Who doesn't? What factors would encourage parents to send their girls to school? How can the current beliefs of parents inform the mobilization of the community at large? As demonstrated in the CHANCE example, parents were listened to by program design staff on what would convince them to send their girls to school. Being able to access school through flexible schedules, local teachers and mobile sites would – and did – influence an attitudinal and behavioral change. How can triggers in other communities and countries be identified and utilized for community mobilization?

Triggers of Change Paradigm

A first step in determining triggers is acknowledging that they are imbedded in individual attitudes and behaviors. A brief – and certainly not thorough- summary interpretation of change behavior research over the past thirty years reminds us of four critical factors that influence change: 1) user attitudes toward the change 2) characteristics of the change 3) contextual support of the change, and 4) resource allocation to the change. (12,13)

A second step is using these four to organize questions on a household survey - or any type of participatory assessment - of parental and community attitudes toward "the change", i.e. girls enrollment. An illustrative example of such questions:

- *Users* – Who will be impacted by this change? What do girls, parents, teachers, and community members currently believe about this change?
- *Characteristics*– How is the change defined? What are its characteristics – one school building, located within 3 to 5 kilometers, managed by a school management committee,

following local curricula taught in a local language, etc? Are all aspects of this change understood by users, valued by users, easily used, designed by users, or managed by users?

- *Contextual Support*– What are the cultural and community norms and practices influencing this change? How and what do girls currently learn? How will schooling benefit the girl, family, and community? How might it detract from other community development activities?
- *Resource Allocation*- What are the available – and unavailable - resources needed to support this change? Are there sufficient policy, financial, and human resources to support, sustain and institutionalize this change? If not, how might those gaps be addressed?

An organizational paradigm accounting for each of the fore-mentioned factors may assist educational stakeholders and researchers in planning mobilization strategies for girls' enrollment. First, it would lay the foundation for identifying initial research questions. Secondly, it would offer a tool to categorically synthesize data findings from that research. Thirdly, it would inform – and organize - the selection of appropriate community-based mobilization strategies for changing attitudes and behaviors around girls' enrollment.

Such a paradigm might look like Figure 1.

Figure 1: Triggers of Change Paradigm-Community Mobilization Girls Education- **Factors**

Change Factors	**USERS**	**INNOVATION**	**CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT**	**RESOURCE ALLOCATION**
Questions				
Synthesis				
Strategy				

When developing a tool (survey/ participatory learning approach/ focus group/questionnaire. Etc.) to solicit the triggers Figure 1 might expand to look like Figure 2 might look as follows:

10

Figure 2: Triggers of Change Paradigm-Community Mobilization Girls Education- **Guiding Questions**

Change Factors/	**USERS**	**INNOVATION**	**CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT**	**RESOURCE ALLOCATION**
Guiding Questions	"Why do you send your daughter to school? What is your attitude toward educating her? What do you expect back from her attendance?"	"What about school influences you to send your daughter despite any hardships to you and your family?	"Are there any individuals within the community that influence to send your daughter to school? If so, who are they? How do they influence you?	"How much did her school expenses cost you last year and how did you secure those? What resources, if available, would assist you in supporting your daughter's attendance?"
Synthesis				
Strategy				

Once the questions are asked, data from their responses could be synthesized using Figure 3:

Figure 3: Triggers of Change Paradigm-Community Mobilization Girls Education- **Synthesis**

Change Factors	USERS	INNOVATION	CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT	RESOURCE ALLOCATION
Guiding Questions	"Why do you send your daughter to school? What is your attitude toward educating her? What do you expect back from her attendance?"	"What about school influences you to send your daughter despite any hardships to you and your family?	"Are there any individuals within the community that influence to send your daughter to school? If so, who are they? How do they influence you?	"How much did her school expenses cost you last year and how did you secure those? What resources, if available, would assist you in supporting your daughter's attendance?"
Synthesis	A majority of parental responses indicate that education of girls is valued since it helps parents not be exploited at the market	School is valued for its ability to enhance girls numeracy skills for use by farming parents at markets	Teachers provide a safe environment in which girls can learn	The school management committee promotes flexible schedules for girls to come to school after household chores are completed
Strategy				

Once the data is synthesized, strategies related directly to the synthesis can be developed as displayed in Figure 4

Figure 4: Triggers of Change Paradigm-Community Mobilization Girls Education- **Strategies**

Change Factors	USERS	INNOVATION	CONTEXTUAL SUPPORT	RESOURCE ALLOCATION
Guiding Questions	"Why do you send your daughter to school? What is your attitude toward educating her? What do you expect back from her attendance?"	"What about school influences you to send your daughter despite any hardships to you and your family?	"Are there any individuals within the community that influence to send your daughter to school? If so, who are they? How do they influence you?	"How much did her school expenses cost you last year and how did you secure those? What resources, if available, would assist you in supporting your daughter's attendance?"
Synthesis	A majority of parental responses indicate that education of girls is valued since it helps parents not be exploited at the market	Teachers provide a safe environment in which girls can learn	School is valued for its ability to enhance girls numeracy skills for use by farming parents at markets	Flexible schedules for girls to come to school after household chores are required
Strategies	Cross-family visits Youth to youth interactions	Popular theater Production On-site visits to schools by doubting parents Home visits by teachers	Community leader-led (Village Chief (tribal sounds antiquated; also, in some communities there is more than one "tribe" or ethnic group) meetings with parents	School management meetings with community to determine school schedules

A trigger based paradigm for planning community mobilization might assist communities in determining, first, what the incentives are for enrolling girls as stated and demonstrated by parents who value and act on their value for education. Next, those triggers could be synthesized into themes community mobilizers could use in changing the attitudes and behaviors of parents not yet convinced to support girls education. These themes, then, would inform the messages and format by which communities could mobilize girl's enrollment.

Conclusion

Mobilizing communities is a powerful strategy to enhance girl's enrollment in schools. Determining effective strategies for mobilization is becoming a popular development activity. This paper suggests how those strategies might be informed by both theory and practice. A paradigm – based in theory and successful practice – proposes steps to develop strategies which reflect parental and community input. It suggests that the theory of change may profit from including a "positive deviance" approach and that engaging parents and community stakeholders in the assessment of their own beliefs may benefit the design of effective community mobilization strategies. But more importantly, it hopes to benefit the 75 million girls throughout the world who have yet to experience the value of education and their parents and communities who have yet to reap a return on an investment that " is probably the most cost-effective investment to improve the standards of living in developing countries, particularly among the poorest populations." (14)

Footnotes:

1. UNESCO, World Education Forum, 2002, page 1
2. Rugh, Andrea. Starting NOW: strategies for helping girls complete primary. SAGE, Academy for Educational Development, November 2000, pg. vii

3. UNGEI – United Nations Girls' Education Initiative - Concept Paper . UNICEF, State of the World's Children Report, 1999, page 1.

4. "Women and Girls: Education, not Discrimination!". UNESCO, World Education Forum 2002, page 1.

5. "Women and Girls: Education, not Discrimination!". UNESCO, World Education Forum 2002, page 2

6. SAVE The Children USA, UGANDA report. Summer 2000, page 3

7. Op.Cit.

8. Murphy, Lynn. Pilot study -Draft of findings – "Community Participation in Community Schools: A Case Study of the Chance Project, Uganda" contracted by Save The Children USA, Education Office. February 2, 2002, page 8

9.Ibid. page 4

10."Uganda and Girls Education". Funding proposal written by Save the Children's Education Office. January 2002. Appendix.

11. Rugh, Andrea. Seeing For Yourself: Research Handbook for Girls Education in Africa. EDI Learning Resource Series. World Bank, pages 5-9

12. Rogers, E.M. Diffusion of Innovations (4th Edition). New York, N.Y. The Free Press. 1995

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